

## Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and High Peak Borough Council

### SP033: Bouncy Castles and Inflatables

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#### Purpose

This procedure has been developed to provide additional guidance on the precautions to be taken when erecting and using inflatable devices on Council owned land.

This document is also intended to give direction to those proposing to hire or operate inflatable's including bouncy castles as part of their organised event, or as part of a contract on behalf of the Council.

Serious incidents have occurred where inflatables have collapsed or blown away in windy conditions.

Health and safety law applies to the supply, hire and use of inflatables for commercial purposes. It does not apply to private, domestic buyers and users.

If followed, the guidance here will assist us in reducing accidents and potential liability to all parties concerned.

#### Related Documents

Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974;  
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;  
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992:  
British Standard EN 14960-2013- Inflatable Play Equipment  
HSG 175 Fairgrounds and Amusement Parks- Guidance on Safe Practice;  
Note PM76- The Safe Operation of Inflatable Bouncing Devices.  
The Events Safety Guide – 2016  
PIPPA or ADIPS Inspection Programme  
HSE Guidance 2019

#### Approval

This document was approved by the Corporate Health and Safety Committee on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 and supersedes all other previous documents issued on this subject.

#### Introduction

There is much evidence to confirm that many injuries occur whilst using a bouncy castle or other type of inflatable play equipment. Most of the injuries are caused by people bouncing off the inflatable onto the ground, being hit by other people or by just falling awkwardly. More recently there have been a number of occasions nationally where bouncy castles were not anchored safely causing fatal injuries to users.

Many of these accidents could have been prevented by adequate supervision and sensible use; however there is a risk of serious disabling injury even when they are correctly operated. Accidents also occur as most bouncy castles and inflatables are designed for use by children not adults.

## **Policy**

### **Events**

At the planning of an event stage the event organiser must complete an Outdoor Event Request Form and submit this along with additional detail to the Council for consideration discussion and permission. The event organiser will need to make their application well in advance of their event not only to ensure the area of land chosen is available but to give themselves sufficient time to collect the documentation that will be required as part of the process.

Where hired the equipment should be hired from a reputable hire company and wherever possible set up, operated and supervised by the hire company's own staff. They should fully comply with the Health and Safety Executive Guidance Note PM76-'The Safe Operation of Inflatable Bouncing Devices'. (This important guide deals with all aspects of safety) and employ suitably experienced and trained adult personnel.

If as part of an event it is proposed that the organiser intends to operate the inflatable themselves, they must ensure that they are provided with written instructions about the safe setting up, operation and supervision of the equipment and that they have evidence that the equipment has been properly maintained in the form of the Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme (ADIPS) inspection report or equivalent.

The event organiser will need to obtain risk assessments from the supplier of the inflatable to cover the delivery and retrieval, siting, set-up and if appropriate the supervision of the equipment. In addition the event organiser must ensure that all aspects of the use of the inflatable are included in the event risk assessment. This is a requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Council will require copies of these documents, along with the site plan, and copies of public liability insurance certificates.

It is the duty of the organiser/contractor to check the site prior to setting up for any event. Although regular inspections are made on all Council open spaces, it is not done on a day to day basis and hazards may exist. Should an event organiser/contractor spot any hazardous area they should notify the Council as soon as possible so it can be rectified prior to the event.

Part of the responsibilities of the organiser/contractor is to ensure that the entire area hired, including surrounding areas has not been littered with rubbish from event.

The event organiser's/contractors insurance should cover any damage to the Council's Ground Maintenance Equipment as a result of items left on or in the ground following the event. Care should be taken to avoid spillage of hazardous liquids resulting in damage to either grass or shrubs etc.

## **Controllers (Contractors)**

Where a contract for the provision of Inflatables has been established the controller (contractor) must ensure that all of the requirements of the contract specification are met and that the above controls are also in place.

Additionally, they must also ensure the following:

- Adequate adult supervision is maintained;
- Risk assessments are developed, maintained, communicated and reviewed;
- Access to dangerous (parts of) machinery (inadequately protected, or unguarded blower units) is restricted at all times;
- Wind checks are carried out and recorded device must not be used if there is a strong wind or in wet weather;
- Accidents to members of the public are reported to the HSE as appropriate and Council;
- New equipment or devices are not introduced unless agreed in writing by the Council;
- Daily compliance checks must be made and recorded;
- In case of fire, adequate means of escape must be maintained at all times and adequate fire fighting equipment available on site;

## **Recognised Hazards**

- Instability and blowing away in windy conditions;
- Falls from the structure;
- Tripping (particularly over anchorages);
- Injury to users caused by boisterous behaviour or overcrowding;
- Access to dangerous (parts of) machinery (inadequately protected, or unguarded blower units);
- Electrical hazards (e.g., shock or burns);
- Inadequate means of escape in case of fire;
- Injury to users caused by wearing inappropriate clothes and shoes;
- Suffocation and entrapment.

## **Recommended Health and Safety Control Measures**

When setting up, carry out the following safety checks in line with the inflatable's operator manual:

No inflatable should be used in winds above 24 mph (38 kmph), which is Force 5 on the Beaufort scale (small trees in leaf begin to sway) All inflatable operators should have available an anemometer for measuring wind conditions. Measurements should be taken at regular intervals and recorded. It is not acceptable to use phone based weather apps to measure wind conditions, as localised conditions can vary significantly.

Certain inflatables may have a lower maximum wind speed for operation. Always check the manufacturer's operating manual to confirm the maximum wind speed for the safe operation of the inflatable.

When the inflatable is being operated outside, use an anemometer to measure the wind speed at regular intervals. If one of these is not available, the inflatable should not be operated outside.

Do **not** use smartphone weather applications to measure wind speed as they do not take localised wind conditions into account.

When using the inflatable outside, all the anchor points must be used, with metal ground stakes at least 380 mm long and 16 mm wide, with a rounded top. They should have a welded metal 'O' or 'D' ring fitted to the end

All inflatables must have at least 6 anchor points. The operator manual will tell you how many there should be, and you should check to ensure they are all still in place and have not been removed.

The ropes used to secure the inflatable should be in good condition and not stretched, frayed or rotten. Never use improvised tow ropes, e.g. a bungee cord.

If ground stakes cannot be used because of the surface (e.g. tarmac) use ballast with anchor points each weighing at least 163 kg and with suitable fixings to attach the guy ropes. The inflatable should be tightly secured to the ground so that the wind cannot get under it and lift it up.

If an inflatable is being used indoors, refer to the operator's manual which will provide instruction on what anchorage is necessary to maintain the shape of the device and prevent overturn.

## **Before use**

Check:

The correct blower is being used (the blower specification, including output, will be given in the operating manual). The correct blower should be being used to inflate the device (the blower specification, including output, will be given in the operating manual).

The blower should be well maintained, and a visual check should be undertaken to ensure that there are no obvious signs of over-tension or sagging of the structure. The manufacturers operating manual should also specify the time it should take for the device to inflate fully.

The use of a blower with either the incorrect output, or one that is poorly maintained can cause an issue with the stability and integrity of the inflatable device giving rise to a risk of serious personal injury.

All associated electrical equipment including blowers must be in good condition.

There are no obvious signs of over-tension or sagging of the structure. Also check if the anchor points have been pulled out during inflation and the connection tube and blower are firmly attached to each other Impact-absorbing mats are in position.

There are no holes or rips in the fabric or seams.

It looks symmetrical – if it looks misshapen or deformed there could be internal problems that make bouncing unpredictable and it should therefore not be used.

### **Safe use, supervision and monitoring**

There should be constant supervision by at least one suitably trained person over the age of 18.

Operators should be able to demonstrate a practical appreciation and understanding of the risk associated with the operation of their device that follows the information set out within the operating manual and HSE guidance.

### **Operating instructions must be supplied on site and should include the following:**

Restrict the number of users on the inflatable at the same time to the limit in the operator manual or on the unit label. Do not exceed the user height limit and keep bigger users separated from smaller ones.

Make sure users can get on and off safely, with safety matting at the entrance that is no more than 2 inches deep.

Users should not wear shoes or glasses, and should empty their pockets of all sharp or dangerous items.

Anyone obviously intoxicated should not be allowed on the bouncy castle/inflatables.

Don't allow users to climb or hang on the walls.

Regularly check that anchor points are still secure.

When operating the inflatable outside, use an anemometer to measure wind conditions at regular intervals, and visually check for changes in wind direction (such as looking at how the trees are swaying).

Ensure wind speed readings are made in the direction of the wind.

### **Tests and inspections**

Initial test- A new inflatable should have an 'initial test' to confirm it complies with BS EN 14960 before it is used.

Annual inspection- Should be carried out by a competent person. They should identify the inflatable and blower by their serial numbers and look at any previous inspection reports and certificates.

The inspection should cover any part of the inflatable and its equipment that may affect its safe operation.

### **Insurance**

Before confirming your booking, you must check that the hire company holds Public Liability (“third party”) insurance to cover the risk of injuries for at least £5M any one incident. A number of hire companies use an overseas-based insurer that is NOT acceptable to the Council so ask for written confirmation of the cover and send it to the Insurance Officer for approval before you take the booking.

Controllers (Contractors) must hold Public Liability (“third party”) insurance to cover the risk of injuries for at least £5M any one incident. Contractors and event organisers are reminded to ensure that any special conditions stipulated in their insurance policies are met at all times.

### **Checklist**

The following is a guide to ensure that the necessary information regarding the use of inflatables is available prior to the event;

- Hire Company Insurance Certificate
- First-aid Provision
- Event Risk Assessment
- Fire Provision
- Hire Company Risk Assessment document
- Pre use inspection- Wind speed anchorage points
- ADIPS/PIPPA Inspection Report or equivalent
- Site Plan

### **Further Information**

Amusement Devices Inspection Procedures Scheme

<http://www.adips.co.uk/>

### **MONITORING, AUDIT AND REVIEW**

The suitability of this procedure is monitored periodically by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, compliance checks will be carried out by those officers agreeing to the use of Bouncy Castles and Inflatables on Council Land.